

REMARKS

The Examiner's thoughtful comments and proposals have been carefully considered.

Claims 4, 5, 6 and 8 have been amended to obviate the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejections. It is respectfully submitted that each now particularly points out and distinctly claims the subject matter which applicants consider to be their invention.

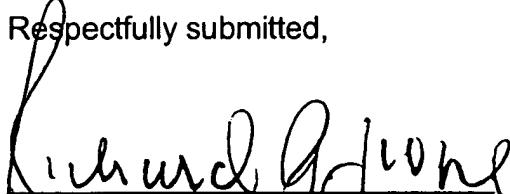
Regarding the prior art rejections, submitted concurrently herewith are certified English language translations of the two priority applications for the above-identified application, Japanese Patent Application No. 179328/1999 filed June 25, 1999 and Japanese Patent Application No. 191859/1999 filed July 6, 1999. They establish an effective U.S. priority date for the claimed subject matter of June 25, 1999.

The *Goto et al.* U.S. Patent No. 6,242,573, was filed in the U.S. on November 1, 1999. Therefore, *Goto et al.* is not prior art to the present application under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and cannot be employed in a 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection. Accordingly, the rejection of Claims 1-3, 5 and 8 based on *Goto et al.* and JP 4-333660 should be withdrawn.

The EP application No. 999297 was filed on November 2, 1999. It was not published until May 10, 2000. Therefore, this publication is not prior art to the present application under any provision of 35 U.S.C. § 102 and cannot be employed in a 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection. As such, the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5 and 8 based on EP application No. 999297 and JP 4-333660 should be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that Claims 1-8 are now in allowable form. Passage of the application to issue is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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